



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

22 October 2003

Mr. Andrew Heyward
President
CBS News
524 West 57th Street
New York, New York 10019

Dear Mr. Heyward:

As members of Congress who either homeschool our own children or support the right of parents to homeschool, we were deeply offended by the recent "Eye on America" dealing with homeschooling.

The October 13th segment, which aired on the CBS Evening News, implied a tragic murder-suicide in rural North Carolina was somehow evidence of a "dark side" of homeschooling, which justified further government regulation of home education. The tenuous connection between this two-year-old tragedy involving a single family, which happened to homeschool, and millions of law-abiding mothers and fathers who successfully and safely educate their children at home everyday is absurd.

What your correspondent, Vince Gonzales, failed to mention in his segment was the numerous child protection laws already exist that could have been used to safeguard the children in question. In point of fact, North Carolina Social Services had repeated contact with the family and had even removed the children from the home for a time. Despite numerous laws and the involvement of State agencies, this tragedy occurred. Yet, Mr. Gonzales solution is to shackle homeschool parents across the country with further laws and regulations that would not have prevented the tragedy in question.

Today American parents, following a tradition that is as old as the Republic itself, are teaching an estimated 1.6 to 2.0 million children at home. The number of families choosing to homeschool is growing at an estimated annual rate of seven to fifteen percent. It is worth noting that homeschooled children score, on average, 80 points higher on the SAT (an aggregate of 1100) than does the overall population. And as *Time Magazine* noted in its August 27th, 2001, issue, "Today Harvard admissions officers attend home-schooling conferences looking for applicants, and Rice and Stanford admit home schoolers at rates equal to or higher than those for public schoolers."

Rather than focusing on such a rare and remarkable case in a report on homeschooling, CBS News could have done itself and its viewers a great service in reporting the success parents have had in educating their children at home. Instead, you chose to take a handful of tragic incidents and, from them, cast aspersions on the entire homeschool movement. Your report was unfair and indicative of both bias and ignorance. We sincerely hope reporting of this kind is the exception and not the rule at CBS News.

Sincerely,



W. Todd Akin (MO-2)
Member of Congress



W.J. (Billy) Tauzin (LA-3)
Member of Congress



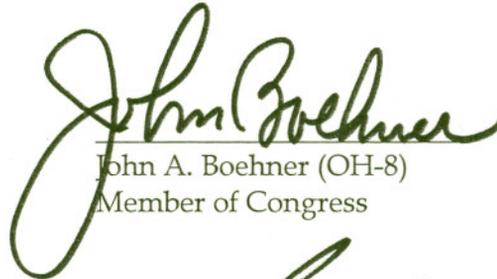
Mike McIntyre (NC-7)
Member of Congress



John Shimkus (IL-19)
Member of Congress



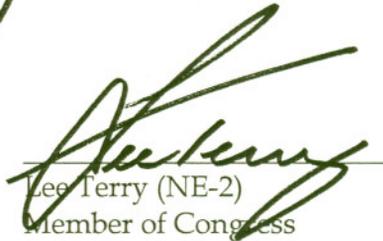
Peter Hoekstra (MI-2)
Member of Congress



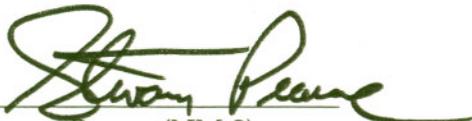
John A. Boehner (OH-8)
Member of Congress



Trent Franks (AZ-2)
Member of Congress



Lee Terry (NE-2)
Member of Congress



Stevan Pearce (NM-2)
Member of Congress



Steve King (IA-5)
Member of Congress



John Sullivan (OK-1)
Member of Congress



John N. Hostettler (IN-8)
Member of Congress



Joseph R. Pitts (PA-16)
Member of Congress



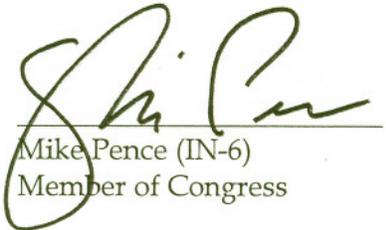
Donald A. Manzullo (IL-16)
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt (AL-4)
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers (AL-3)
Member of Congress



Mike Pence (IN-6)
Member of Congress



Curt Weldon (PA-7)
Member of Congress



Jim Ryun (KS-2)
Member of Congress



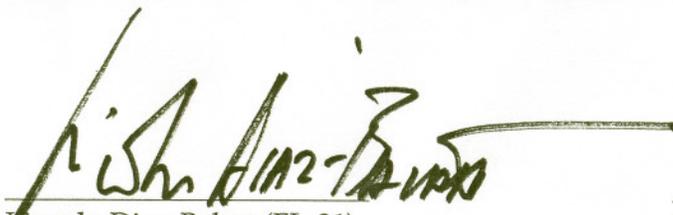
Ed Whitfield (KY-1)
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson (SC-2)
Member of Congress



Virgil Goode (VA-5)
Member of Congress



Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL-21)
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-25)
Member of Congress



Darrell E. Issa (CA-49)
Member of Congress



Barbara Cubin (WY)
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher (CA-46)
Member of Congress



Frank R. Wolf (VA-10)
Member of Congress



Mark Souder (IN-3)
Member of Congress



Roscoe G. Bartlett (MD-6)
Member of Congress



Marilyn N. Musgrave (CO-4)
Member of Congress



Zach Wamp (TN-3)
Member of Congress



Mark R. Kennedy (MN-6)
Member of Congress